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A THEME FOR SONG

POETS, I give you theme for song;
The little loves ye sing too long.

There was a Woman—for her feet
God made the world to blossom sweet.

There was a Woman—God loved so,
He made immaculate as snow.

There was a Woman—made to be
The Mother of Divinity.

There was a Woman—at her sign
God changed the water into wine.

There was a Woman—brave she stood
E'en to the end beneath His Rood.

There was a Woman—this her prize—
God crowned her Queen of Paradise.

There was a Woman—Love in her
Beheld His fairest worshiper.

Poets, I give you theme for song;
The little loves ye sing too long.

CREATION'S BEST

MORN of creation, and the azure skies
Rose radiant at the gates of Paradise;
God saw that it was good, and thus spake He—
“So blue My Lady Mary’s gown shall be.”

Morn of creation, and the mountain snow
Imaged to Heaven the virgin dawning’s glow;
And thus spake God, Who saw that it was good—
“So white shall be My Lady Mary’s hood.”

Morn of creation, and the virgin sod
Lifted its lilies to the feet of God;
God saw that it was good. “So pure,” He said,
“My Lady Mary shall be fashionèd.”

Morn of creation, and God’s mighty hand
Flowered to glory sea and sky and land;
God saw that it was good, but thus God thought:
“In Lady Mary shall My best be wrought.”

IMMACULATE

IN the wake of the drifting sun a cloud,
Feathery white as a fairy's shroud;
And I think, so white must Our Lady be
Drenched in the Sunburst Heavenly.

In the deeps of the azure **blue above**
Pinions white of a homing dove;
And I think, so white must the fair dove be
Bearing the Branch of the olive tree.

On the crest of the sea a sunwashed sail,
Silvery white in the spring-time gale;
And I think, so white must the Vessel be
Whose blessed Freight was Divinity.

By the side of the road a cherry-tree,
White with its May-time prophesy;
And I think, so white must the Mother be
To bear the God of Eternity.

FOR OUR LADY'S NATIVITY

WHAT hour that thou wast born?
I ween 'twas at the morn,
When o'er the hill-tops peered the dawn,
Wond'ring why earth so Heavenly shone.

Or mayhap 'twas the noon
First heard thy mother's croon;
For that the seared-lipped Prophet Sun
Might put his seal thy lips upon.

Or yet 'twas night, I ween,
Mystic with starry sheen;
And stars knew that He gave them light
To make thy royal pathway bright.

Or night or noon or morn,
What hour that thou wast born;
I know a new world's Morning Star
Peered through the Heavenly gates ajar.

ANNUNCIATION DAY

THERE is a gleam in the skies today,
A gleam in the cloudy, gray March skies;
Methinks the silver behind the gray
Is the flashing of pinions where Gabriel flies.

There is a song in the breeze today,
A song in the spring-filled, cold March breeze;
Methinks the song is the glad Ave
Of the seraphim weaving their harmonies.

Sing now, ye winds, and gleam, ye skies,
No marvel the world is bright and gay;
For a corner of earth is Paradise,
And God's Son is Mary's Son today.

ANNUNCIATION LILIES

HAD ye no wonder, lilies, why ye bloomed
Through silent ages, pouring out your scent;
Reigning a while then unto darkness doomed;
Your sweetness on the heedless desert spent?

This day gives answer to your wondering,
As Gabriel uplifts you from the sod,—
The sweetest harvest of earth's blossoming,—
And consecrates you to the Maid of God.

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

LET there be light!"—and blushing, maiden day
Went forth to nuptials with her Orient lord:
"Hail, full of grace!"—and Light-Eternal's Ray
Was Spoused to the Mother of the Word.

THE VISITATION

GOOD wife of Zachary, what dost thou see?
“Behold, across the hills, She comes to me,
My poor kinswoman; trudging wearily.”

Good wife of Zachary, why dost thou weep?
“For joy to tell Her of my secret deep:
Lo, in my womb my little child doth leap.”

Good wife of Zachary, why dost thou stare?
“Oh, blest was I—now blest beyond compare:
See—at my door—God’s Mother standing there!”

MAGNIFICAT!

DEAR Traveler from lowly Nazareth,
How blessed are Thy feet upon the hills
Of royal Juda, whence the singing rills
Bear Jordan-way the perfume of Thy breath.
At every step a rosebud openeth;
God now the Promised Land with harvest fills.
The harvest song from out thy bosom thrills:
Magnificat! O blest Elizabeth!
Mayhap some day, dear Traveler of God,
When I am looking to the hills a-west,
I too the roses opening shall see;
Shall see the glory where Thy feet have trod:
Shall hear Thy voice and know how God hath blessed—
The Mother of my Lord should come to me!

ASSUMPTION DAY

WHEN Virgin Mary in her death-sleep lay,
The heavens, sorrowful, were drear and gray,
Till angels, bearing her to Paradise,
With her blue mantle azured all the skies.

HOME COMING

HOW often at the dusk in Nazareth
Thou, Mother, eager for Thy Son, didst wait;
At last the many times He reckoneth,
And now 'tis He that openeth the Gate.

THE QUEEN'S HIGHWAY

O SLOW of sight, 'tis not a cloud
Thou seest in the August sky;
I know it for the needless shroud
That fell from her as she went by.

O slow of sight, the azure blue
Is not the heaven's vaulted roof:
I know it for the fadeless hue
The angels dyed her garment's woof.

O slow of sight, 'tis not the glow
Of summer noon upon thine eyes;
'Tis but the path the angels go
To lead their Queen to Paradise.

ASSUMPTA EST!

O VISION in the sky, I think thou art a tree,
A burning tree—God's burning bush—of roses
white;

Too fair for earth; and Eden's angels garner thee,
To show to Heaven's Gardener the pretty sight.

O vision in the sky, I'd like thee to a star,
So fair a star as searched the plains of Bethlehem;
A mine of gems God's angels gather from afar,
To magnify the splendor of His diadem.

Or I would like thee to the radiance of the moon,
That breaketh through the clouds upon surprised eyes;
A wake of golden light across the blue lagoon,
Where freighted vessels seek the port of Paradise.

Yea, vision in the sky, I think thou art the sun,
The gold-white sun that hath no cloud to hide its flame;
A chariot of fire where Heaven's Eternal One
Rideth in majesty while angels praise His Name.

O vision in the sky, yea, more than these thou art,
Mounting the azure hills upon thy Heavenly quest;
Thou art the spotless dove, fleeing from earth apart,
God's Dove at eve now homing to Thy Heavenly nest.

FOR OUR LADY'S CROWNING

WHAT Artisan is He that makes thy Crown!
How oft His boy-hands weaved a coronet
Of fern and lily, and with love-sighs set
Thee Queen of Joy in Nazareth's dear town.
Faded the blooms that gave thee queen's renown;
No blooms in Golgotha but thorns blood-wet;
Yet would He not thy royalty forget,
And on thy brow—Pain's Queen—the thorns pressed
down.

Now in thy tomb are left earth's flowers and thorns;
He would have fairer things to crown thee Queen
Of Glory, Queen of all the heavens above:
Lo! with what crown His art thy brow adorns—
Crowned with the stars? Nay, stars were all too mean;
He crowns thee with the vision of His love!

MARY ENTHRONED

HOW high hath God exalted thee? the moon
Is lifted up so high I dare not mete
Its distance; yet 'tis foot-stool for thy feet,
A silver dais for thy silver shoon.
How far away the sun at height of noon!
'Tis but the glory of thy royal seat;
And glinting stars are but the countless suite
Of sea-lights for thine azure-sailed galloon.

Our eyes have compassed these; eye hath not seen
The glories God hath fashioned for His blest;
Then, greater glory for Creation's Best—
The Woman never soiled by stain terrene.
How high hath God exalted thee? Thou art
No lower than thy Son's enthroning heart!

HER PATHWAY

WHERE walks my Princess through the wood,
The mosses make a path for her;
The trees in reverential mood,

Eager to be her shelterer,
Droop shadow o'er her azure hood,
Where walks my Princess through the wood.

Where walks my Princess through the field,
The grasses weave a carpet green;
The lilies stand—a silver shield—

Lest any harm should come between;
And all the blooms their incense yield,
Where walks my Princess through the field.

Where walks my Princess through the dale,
The violets her path adorn;
Against the whiteness of her veil

The red rose riseth with its thorn,
Lest any evil should assail,
Where walks my Princess through the dale.

Where walks my Princess down the skies,
The sun-stars blaze a path of gold;
The shielding clouds around her rise

With wings celestial to enfold
The way that leads to Paradise,
Where walks my Princess down the skies.

L'Envoi

O Princess, walking side by side
With Him thou sawest crucified,
Teach how my stumbling steps may be
Directed unto Him and Thee!

MAYING.

IF I should find a violet,
This merry morn of May,
A little hidden violet,
With essences of Eden wet,
Oh, I would sing a roundelay,
And roundelay and violet
With sweet devotion I would set
Before the Queen of May.

If I should find a snowdrop white,
This merry morn of May,
A little, virgin snowdrop white,
A wimpled fairy anchorite,
Oh, I would sing a roundelay,
And roundelay and snowdrop white
I'd proffer with my heart's delight
Unto the Queen of May.

If I should find a lily-bell,
This merry morn of May,
A modest little lily-bell,
Ringing its fairy canticle,
Oh, I would sing a roundelay,
And roundelay and lily-bell,
I'd bid the sweetest love-songs tell
To Mary, Queen of May.

Though I may find no flowers, O Queen,
This merry morn of May,
The while the modest flowers, O Queen,
Bloom, far from me, in woodlands green,
Oh, take instead my roundelay,
My rosary of prayer, O Queen,
And fancy 'tis Love's garland e'en
That crowns thee Queen of May.

A MAY SONG

MAY, May, May!
And the world is drenched with the lilac musk;
The cherry blooms pattern a milky way,
An elfin trail in the fields of dusk;
For the lilac bush and the cherry tree
Know that their Queen comes presently.

May, May, May!
And the pure-eyed, innocent violet
Is robed in her gossamer blue today,
The fairest floweret visioned yet;
For the violet is adorned so fair
Waiting her Queen to wander there.

May, May, May!
And the skies with glory are prodigal;
On every side of the woodland way
The drifts of light on the greensward fall;
For the golden sun and the grasses green
Know they must greet their gentle Queen.

May, May, May!
And I would that all of the art were mine
To fashion somewhere on this glorious day
A flowery fane She would call her shrine;
And the lilac bush and the cherry tree
Seeing her there would envy me.

IN MAYTIME

NOW is the soul of springtime burgeoning;
The highway of the world is white with blow
Of cherry blossoms, as when maidens strow
The path for her who comes for marrying.
Adown the vale the road goes following
Until it compasseth its quest below—
To join the road that heavenward doth go;
Cloud ways and cherry for the feet of spring.
O blessed white road, on this vernal morn
No marvel thou art white, for that the Queen
Of Maytime cometh softly down thy way:
Now is creation virginal reborn,
That virgin earth by Virgin eyes be seen—
For when God made the world, I know, 'twas May.

A GIFT FOR MARY

WHAT would a knight for his ladye fair,
That would I do for thee;
In every tournament would I dare
To win one rose for thy raven hair,
For joy thy smile to see.

What would a soldier do for his queen,
That would I do for thee;
I would bare my breast to the sabres keen
Of the paynim hordes, and die serene,
To keep thy kingdom free.

What would a son for his mother dear,
That would I do for thee;
I would toil and sorrow from year to year
To spare thee the pain of a single tear,
Then die in ecstasy.

O Queen and Mother and Ladye Fair,
What may I do for thee?
I am no soldier or knight to dare,
I am only a child with a childish prayer—
But it holds the soul of me!

AVE MARIS STELLA

"The burden of the desert of the sea"—Isaias, xxi: 1

I HEAR the burden of the desert of the sea
The while it waketh to the dawning eagerly
A canticle of glory to the morning star—
Sing AVE MARIS STELLA, for the night is far!

I hear the burden of the desert of the sea
The while it sightheth to the darkness crooningly:
A psalm of holy trust unto the star of night—
Sing AVE MARIS STELLA, for God's beacon light!

Sing AVE MARIS STELLA, when the dawn breaks clear!
Sing AVE MARIS STELLA, when the night is near!
And seas may sleep in peace or threaten angrily,
Star of the Sea, while thou art watching over me.

THE CHATELAINE

DEAR Chatelaine of Nazareth,
How quick thy hands the door unlock
When little Jesus summoneth—
“Lo, at the door I stand and knock.”

Dear Chatelaine of Paradise,
Wilt thou unlatch to me thy door
That night when thou shalt hear the cries
Of one that needs his mother sore?

FOR OUR LADY'S PRAISERS

WHO sings her a song, I would weave him a crown;
A crown, if the music be made to tell
Of rose-buds or lily-bells bending down
To broider the hem of her sea-blue gown;
Who sings her a song, I would pay him well.

Who sings her a song, I would weave him a crown;
A crown nor of silver nor golden thread;
Not thus could I blazon his song's renown,
My crown is but leaves which a day will brown:
His song for a coronal witherèd!

Who sings her a song, I would weave him a crown;
Oh, lack of the jewels he will not rue!
For better than gems is her love smiling down
To fashion a nimbus from bay-leaves brown :
O singer, I pledge Heaven's crown to you.

EARTH REVISITED

O QUEEN, that art so fair enskyed,
Adorned with beatific crown,
Dost thou not sometimes lay aside
Thy Heavenly sceptre to come down
And in the pleasant places roam
Which God made for thy childhood's home?

And when the earth is white with May,
(Though Heaven infinitely excels)
Dost thou not sometimes come away
From Eden's starry asphodels,
The fragrant lily-paths to see
Where little Jesus walked with thee?

O Queen that art of Paradise,
Oh, be thou yet of earth the queen,
And sometimes from beyond the skies
Come back to each familiar scene;
Hear thy poor children calling thee
Back to their lonely nursery.

OUR LADY'S PROPHETS

IN every star I see a gem
God fashioned for her diadem;
In every whisper of the breeze
The telling of her mysteries;
In every blossom by the road
The garden Jesus for her sowed;
In every mother's eyes I see
Her mother-love for Christ—and me.

MOTHERING ARMS

THY arms were made to hold the Child Divine;
Yea, but thy Child to manhood now is grown.
He will not mind, if I should call thee mine
And take possession of His childhood throne.

TO THE QUEEN OF POETS.

AH me—whose lips are clodden things—
I would be as a spirit-Pan that sings
Of the wondrous things
That are hidden under the angel's wings.

And ah, were the choice of the poem mine,
I'd chose no Dantean strain divine,
But the song of mine
Were a Maid's "MAGNIFICAT" like thine.

MY ROSARY

THIS is my rosary—the count of joys
Which God has given me with lavish hand,
Of life and faith and love's unnumbered toys
That made my nursery a fairy land.

This is my rosary—the count of woes
Which God, more loving, lavished on my life,
Of thwarted self, of thorns 'neath every rose,
Weak manhood and the never ending strife.

This is my rosary—the count of hopes
That makes the joys and woes a dream that ends,
Of God and visioned Love when Heaven opes
To gardens where my Queen the roses tends.

MEISTERSINGERS

O LADYE, at the court of God.
I'd choose a troubadour for thee;
And all the world is not too broad
To choose who will thy minstrel be.

It was a poet great, I deemed
Most fit to glorify thy name,
But never learned poet dreamed
The song that could thy favor claim.

It was a little troubadour
That never learned the singer's art;
Her sweet "Hail Mary" o'er an o'er
She offered from her sinless heart.

So, Ladye, at the court of God,
I choose her troubadour for thee;
For while to thee she giveth laud
She telleth her white beads for me.

CANDLEMAS

THEY sold me candles by the pound,
And thought they sold me only wax;
They never guessed the things I found,
The values dealers cannot tax.

This candle for a baby's eyes,
A pillared fire along the night,
A prophet of His Paradise
To one redeemèd to the Light.

This candle for a bed of death,
For some old acolyte to hold,
Awaiting there with bated breath
For gates eternal to unfold.

Oh, many were the dreams I found
Among the boxes that I bought;
They sold me candles by the pound—
It was not wax, but stars, I got.

GOD'S PORTER

KEEPER of the stable door,
Joseph, 'tis a humble task;
But thou guardest treasure, more
E'en than Solomon could ask.

Keeper of the stable door,
Art God's porter still today?
See, I come a shepherd poor;
Thou wilt turn me not away.

TO SAINT JOSEPH

BLESSED that craft of thine, dear laborer;
Builder for God ! yea, was it not thy hand
Upreared the fairest fane in Holy Land—
The humble home that sheltered Christ and Her?
Yet e'en than this thine art was sacreder;
The Artisan Divine, whose Wisdom planned
The templed world, before thy bench did stand
To learn His trade—Jesus, the Carpenter.
Be builder still ! Protect what Christ hath raised,
His holy Church steadfast on Peter's Rock :
Guard every home from sin's destroying shock,—
A holy family where God is praised.
And then, dear carpenter of Nazareth,
Build thou my tomb when I go down to death.

THE NIGHT OF LITTLE THINGS

O F Littleness this night is eloquent:
A little stable is the chosen nest
Of Heaven's Dove, the Paradisal quest
Of men and angels mingling reverent.
The little stars in Heaven's sheep-fold pent
Flock to the bars to watch the Lambkin blest
Whom little earth—lambs welcome as the guest—
God with a little manger-throne content.

Yea, Little Child, Thy love hath magnified
The little ones alone this Christmas night,
In giving them the beatific sight
To eyes of great and selfish ones denied.
So, Little Christ, let us Thy lesson know—
The door to Thine abode is small and low.

THE LIGHT SHINETH

THERE was a light the shepherds saw
Above the field of sheep;
No marvel that they bowed in awe
To see that star-filled deep:
And, Lord, I would that I might see
That Star that shows the way to Thee!

There was a light the shepherds saw
Within a Mother's eyes,
The love wherewith a Maid did draw
A God from Paradise:
And, Lord, I would that I might see
That "Morning-Star" that smiled on Thee!

There was a light the shepherds saw
Upon a Baby's face;
And shepherds knew the bed of straw
Was God's most holy place:
And, Lord, I would that I might see
That Light of Light that beamed from Thee!

There was a light the shepherds saw
Within their humble souls;
And, lo, to them this holiest awe—
To see Faith's flaming coals:
And, Lord, I thank Thee that I see
Thy "*Fiat Lux*"—of faith in Thee!

A SONG FOR CHRISTMAS

IS IT of gentle lambs to sing?
Ah, but the little lambs are dear,
Tenderly folded at evening
At the feet of their loving shepherd here.
But the lambs are even no theme for lays
When a gentler Lamb must be extolled;
Oh, vain to sing in the lambkins' praise
When the Lamb of God hath sought our fold.

Is it of flashing stars to sing?
Ah, but the stars are fair tonight,
Lilies angelical burgeoning
To glory the skies with their harvest white.
But even the stars are a sorry theme
When the Orient Sun invades the skies;
Oh, vain to sing of an earthly gleam
When the Vision of God hath met mine eyes.

Is it of angel choirs to chant?
Ah, but Eden is emptied quite
While every angel hierophant
Brings tidings unto the earth tonight.
But their phalanxes no song inspire
When their Great Anointed keeps the fort;
Yea, vain to sing of an angel choir
When the King of Angels holdeth court.

Is it of loving hearts to sing?

And the world of love hath overflow,
From the shepherd unto the Orient king,

Where Mary the Mother of God bows low.
But loving hearts are an idle dream

When the Heart of Love hath opened wide;
Oh, vain to make man's love my theme
When Love Eternal is at my side.

But sing, my soul, of the little lambs,

And sing of the stars' exultant fire;
Sing of the angels' dithyrambs,

And sing of every heart's desire;
Yea, are they all the Christmas song

Of glory to God and peace to men,
The song of the Lover that waiteth long
Till we come back to His Heart again.

THE GIFT TREE

THERE was a little Christmas tree,
So many years ago;
It was as small, as small could be,
Scarce taller than the snow.

And angels emptied Heaven quite,
To dizen that wee tree,
Till all outshone with holy light
For little Christ to see.

O fated tree, O blessed tree,
So many years ago.
It grew as big, as big could be,
For thirty years or so.

Then Christ its burden did uplift
To heights of Calvary,
And lo, He was Himself the Gift
Upon that blessed Tree!

CHRISTMAS NIGHT

STAR singeth unto star this holy night,
And skies are flamed with Paradisal fires;
Moon-rays transfigure clouds to pillared light,
Like phalanxed pinions of seraphic choirs.
O Night of Light, wherefore this wondrous blaze,
So fulgent as the flash of summer morn?
The stars sing: "Lo! It is the Day of Days!
For on this night the Orient Light is born!"

Lamb bleateth unto lamb on Juda's hills,
And never lambkins made such piteous plea;
The tender plaint the watching shepherd thrills,
In wonderment at some strange mystery.
O little lambs, wherefore your pleading call?
There are no prowling wolves to give you fright.
The lambs cry: "Lo! The weakest Lamb of all,
God's little new-born Lamb, is cold this night!"

Flower bloometh unto flower; and Bethlehem
Now glorifieth winter into spring,
As hands angelic wreath a diadem
From out the crocus-lilies burgeoning.
O Night of Bloom, wherefore this panoply,
Till earth is fragrant as an Eden bower?
The flowers speak: "Ah, joy a flower to be,
This night when Jesse's Rod bursts into flower!"

Oh, heart, my heart, now sing thy carol sweet!
Sing as the stars before the Orient Light:
Plead as the lambkins at the Christ-Child's feet;

And burst in blossom for this Noel Night.
For heart, my heart, no flower, no lamb, no star,
Hath need as thou to magnify God's name;
For lo, my heart, so far from God, so far,
This night the Shepherd comes His sheep to claim.

AT THE CROSSROADS

O CHRIST, it is so hard to follow Thee!
Who say 'tis easy do not know what way
Thy weary feet have plodded bleedingly:
They run a joyful road, and "Lo," they say,
"Here is our Christ—or there; this way He went
In pleasant places where the flowers blow
Drenching our hearts with opiating scent."
False Christs that go where we would have them go!

A pleasant path for Christ? A road of ease?
Lo, here at Life's crossroads I hesitate:
One road so fair where laughing deities
Go with the loves that all their longing sate;
The other road is flowerless and drear,
A road of jagged stones, a lonely way
Of hardship unto blood, no loves to cheer,
And only Death to bid the time of day.

I know which way is Thine, the while I moan
Thou didst not go upon the road of ease.
Afraid am I Thy way must be my own,
Half wishing that the laughing deities
Had forced me on their way that I might plead,
Love-sated, how that I had lost my road;
But Christ, the sign-post of Thy Cross I'll heed;
Lead on ! I will not kick against Thy goad.

THE SECRET OF PRAYER

I TOSSED my prayers to Thee,
As saying—"Here's an alms
Poor Beggar-Christ from me
To soothe Thy leprous palms."

Again I cross Thy path;
My alms before Thee lies
Untouched, and sorrow hath
Dominion of Thine eyes.

Now humbled to the ground
I make love's infant plea,
And know that I have found
The only prayer to Thee.

THE FEAR OF LOVE

HOW much Thou lovest me!
Thy love Thou dost avow;
And Thou art Verity,
Else could I think that Thou
Would'st to Thy creature bow?

How much Thou lovest me!
Thy love my eyes behold;
Else could I fancy Thee
Moved by this love untold—
A God for mankind sold?

How much Thou lovest me!
Therefore the awful dread
That I accursed may be
Because I coveted
These earthly loves instead.

A CHANT FOR PAIN

THERE are enough to sing the rose;
Come, let us sing the rue.
O rue, that in His garden-close
In wild profusion grew.

There are enough to sing the wine;
Come, let us sing the gall.
O gall, become a drink divine
At Jesus' thirsting call.

There are enough to sing the crown;
Come, let us sing the cross.
O Cross, Love's balance weighted down
With God to pay our loss.

There are enough to sing the bay;
Come, let us sing the thorn.
O thorn, that on His forehead lay,
The rabble's heartless scorn.

There are enough to sing of mirth;
Come, let us sing of pain.
O pain, that gave true love to earth,
When Christ our Love was slain.

BUT THAT ON THE GOOD GROUND

AND wouldst Thou plant, O Husbandman,
A field I have for Thee;
Long years I've delved and tended it;
'Tis barren yet to me.

I prized it as a fertile field,
And lavish sowed the seeds;
I waited for the fulsome crop,
And lo, I find but weeds!

But wouldst Thou plant, O Husbandman,
Oh, make my heart Thy field,
And if I water it with tears,
Good fruit to Thee 'twill yield.

A PRAYER FOR STRENGTH

TEACH me Thy will," I prayed so fervently,
Loud words that shielded my hypocrisy.
Do I not know the mandate of Thy will,
Though weak my soul Thy justice to fulfill?
Thy will is writ in document complete—
To lift the cross that lieth at my feet,
Thy cross to be embraced and borne as mine,
My laggard footsteps following in Thine.
I know Thy will, yet would I argue so:—
Wilt Thou not give me other way to go?
I would a cross of fairer fashioning,
A common cross is such a vulgar thing,
For criminals and Gods! Undignified
The world regards a body crucified.
Teach me Thy will, but let it, Lord, be such
That I may not be called to suffer much.—
"Teach me Thy will,"—thus prayed I fervently
Loud words that shielded my hypocrisy.
I know Thy will. God, give me strength this day
My own poor silly will to cast away.

THE DANGER HOUR

S AVIOUR! I need Thee most to save
Not when the tempest roar,
Not when the angry tidal wave
Bursts the confining shore.

But when the days are shadowless
And in my strength I boast,
Oh, save me from my foolishness!
For then I need Thee most.

A PRAYER FOR MERCY

LOOK at me, God,—how Thou hast made me
Tender of flesh that at pain I quail:
See how the littlest ills have laid me
Cowardly trembling beneath Thy flail.

Tender of ear—that a discord frightens,
Dainty of tongue as an epicure;
Tender of eye, only beauty brightens—
Flesh that cannot a pain endure.

Look at me, God,—how I am urging
Mercy to make my poor body well;
How could I bear then the pains unpurging—
This tender body in flaming Hell!

Look at me, God, and rend me and break me;
Tender my lips, make them kiss Thy rod:
Bearing Thy Cross, Thou wilt not forsake me,
To leave me aching in Hell, dear God.

THE HAPPY JOURNEY

THANKS be to Thee, O Christ, I am no fool.
I know that he who doth aspire to earn
Thy wisdom-gift must seat him in the school
Where Thou art Master, teaching him to learn.

I know the goal to which I would aspire,
None other than the vision of my God;
And I must seek what way Thou dost desire
By these my laggard footsteps should be trod.

Hard way, as learned the sons of Zebedee!
A road that windeth over Calvary's hill;
The crown of thorns, the cross of agony,
The bitter cup which blood and wormwood fill.

Good Christ, that showest where my feet must wend,
I thank Thee, though the road is drear and rough;
E'en if there were no Heaven at the end,
To bear the cross with Thee were joy enough.

THE COMRADE

O CHRIST, that I with Thee
Might walk the stony way
That ends on Calvary:
And on the hilltop *stay*.

Is mine the coward's fate
To be unwished of Thee?
Too weak to be Thy mate:
Hast Thou no trust in me?

But I'm Thy soldier, God!
Must not a soldier fight?
Let me not be a clod
To hide myself in fright.

So I might hear Thee call,
"Comrade, bring help to Me!"
O Christ, what joy to fall
A soldier aiding Thee!

NATURE REDEEMED

O CHRIST, couldst Thou have died in other mode?
 (Our Christ beheaded as His dear son Paul?
 Christ crushed as Stephen 'neath the rocky load?
 Christ doomed by beast or flood or fire to fall?)

O sacred death whatever form He sought!
 But, sword, not thou didst give man his first hurt;
And stones, beasts, flood, and fire, no crime ye wrought
 Within that Eden once His love begirt.

But, Tree, thou didst the parricidal deed!
 (For this thou'lt sigh until the Judgment morn.)
For me He died; so on thee must He bleed,
 That from His pain new man, new tree, be born.

LOVE REJECTED

O H, love is never a spirit tame,
Oh, love is never a trembling flame;
'Tis wild as the crash of the water-fall,
As fierce as the glare of the meteor-ball,
Or else it is never a love at all.

Yea, love is ever a surging sea,
As deep, as wide, as Eternity;
It roars and it swells as the doubling tide,
It surges with never a turn aside;
Ah, love is loving if all else died.

O Love, we were lovers so long ago!
I warmed at the flame of Thy golden glow;
I listened the trump of Thy sea-song blow:
But the flame is hid in a drift of snow,
And the tide goes silently to and fro,
O God, will I ever Thy old love know?

THE GLORY

LORD, I crave the glory
Thou canst mete to me;
Happy death, though gory,
That can lead to Thee.

Glory be denied me,
Me in Heaven the least;
If Thou art beside me,
Need I glory's feast?

Crave I not Heaven's pleasure,
All unworthy I;
Glory's fullest measure,
In Thy love to die.

THY WILL BE DONE!

O GOD, I am afraid to hear Thee speak,
Though, like to Samuel, I cry: "Speak, Lord!"
For, see, this pampered flesh of mine is weak,
And, guilty, shrinks from penitence abhorred.

I am afraid, for knowing Thou wilt say:
"Cut off the arm that scandalizes thee,
Pluck out the eye, and throw them both away,
Lest they should maim thy soul eternally."

Maimèd for life! O God, it is so hard
To face fore'er the desert's lonely tomb;
A living death, my heart an empty shard
Which once was filled with pleasure's sweet perfume.

I know what Thou wilt say—"Cut, spare not, burn!"
O God, it cannot be Thou meanest me?
I am not Antony, I cannot learn
To walk the desert road to Calvary.

O God, I'm sore afraid to hear Thee speak.
Was Antony, now Saint, as weak as I?
But, loving Christ, that knowest I am weak,
Tell me Thy will, and give me grace to try.

THE MISER

THOU art no miser, God, in gifts to me;
All of Thy love is mine, as all the sea
One little boat could sail eternally.

But Thou dost miser what I give to Thee;
Calling my gifts a "treasure Heavenly,"
And craving me as 'twere Thou needest me.

A PRAYER FOR THE ELEVENTH HOUR

O MASTER of the Vineyard, when wilt Thou give me
work?

Unprofitable servant must I be all my years?
For others I have labored, their tasks I would not shirk;
They flout me now as useless, and scorn my pauper
tears.

The last hour is beginning, the day is nearly o'er,
Too weak am I for treading the wine grapes in Thy
press;
But while alone Thou treadest, I could—(alas, no more!)
Just wipe Thy sweating forehead and solace Thy dis-
tress.

O Master of the Vineyard, hire me this hour for Thine,
Take me within Thy household, to be Thy meanest
slave:
Nought can I do but mingle my teardrops with Thy wine;
Oh, tread my heart, dear Vintner; no other wage I
crave.

AT BENEDICTION

LORD, we have fashioned Thee a throne
Of gold and precious gems;
Our best we give to Thee alone,
Thrones, sceptres, diadems.

And yet methinks I see Thee smile
At what our hand uplifts;
For gold and gems were Thine, the while
We fancied them our gifts.

I own nought—but the will to raise
Thy throne within my breast;
Lord, take it now, and all my days
Be there my King and Guest.

LOVE-THIRST

A PITEOUS cry,—“I thirst,”
A desert Calvary is,
From parchèd lips outburst:
Without an oasis,
Where soul and body swoon
Beneath the fell simoon.
“I thirst.” Ah, surely He
Whose FIAT made the sea
Can make the living waters rise
From stone, in answer to His cries.

“I thirst:” the rocks remain
Barren, deaf to his pain,
Hard as the hearts of those
Who stand and mock His woes.
The mocking of it all:
The vinegar and gall,
The sponge and hyssop rod,
Man’s loving-cup to God:
O Scorners scorned, He will not sate
His thirsting with the dregs of hate.

“I thirst”: so thirsteth she,
Who yearneth achingly
To wet His burning mouth
And ease the parching drouth.
Alas, for days so blest,
A babe He sought her breast;
Alas, the years she poured
Drink for her Son and Lord;

Oh, woe, that in His sorest need
His thirsting cry she cannot heed.

“I thirst”; He bows His head;
“It is consummatèd.”
The Son of God hath died,
His thirst unsatisfied.
O Christ, the boundless sea
Would not have sated Thee:
Not water dost Thou crave
Thy burning lips to lave;
Thy thirst was for the love of men:
Alas! that we denied Thee then!

SAITH THE LOST SOUL

I

LOVE DESPISED

PREACHER, you're right; there is a Hell!
Don't mind how pagan Christians sneer,
Seeking their terrors to dispel;
They do but hope against their fear.

Give me no God that plays at law,
That thunders law and threatens woe,
Then smiles at all the crime He saw
With, "Child, I was but fooling so."

Or, "Child, I did not care a bit
The while my solemn law you broke;
You robbed and killed? Well, what of it?
A Hell? Pshaw! Gods must have their joke."

Preacher, you need not prove a Hell
Till hate is love and wrong is right.
No man needs even God to tell—
Who murdered Love must flee His sight.

II

FOOLISH VIRGINS

I'VE learned my foolishness,
I that was so wise,
So eager to confess
Earth was Paradise.

I studied in the books of man,
I filled my soul with treasured lore;
Ah, life was such a little span,
I had no time for cheaper store;
Love knocked unheeded at my door.

I followed after mortal joy,
I gave my flesh its sate of bliss,
And lust was such a pretty toy,
I had no time for fools like this—
Love luring with a lustless kiss.

I've learned my foolishness,
I that was so wise;
My earth is tenantless
Far is Paradise.

III

THE JUDGMENT

I DID not see the face of God:
 (That were essential Paradise;
 And Hell could not my soul defraud
 Of joy, remembering His eyes.)
I did not see Him, but I knew
 His eyes were searching through my soul,
My naked soul; nought could I do
 To hide from Him its scripted scroll.

I did not hear: God has no speech,
 And mortal ears are in the tomb.
I felt deep silences outreach
 From Him; then bursting through the gloom
A light that showed my soul to me,
 Unpurged, sinful, loveless thing:
Compelled, I cried—"Let justice be!"
 Hellward I turned me anguishing.

IV

IGNORED

THE ghostly deserts I have walked alone;
Hopeless of time the silences endure.
I ache with tensioned soul eager to own
The only Love that can content assure.

The silences endure: Love does not speak,
Love does not even hear, Love will not see.
In vain the ways of comforting I seek;
I am ignored as if I ceased to be.

O agony of God's unnoticing!
The penalty of service negative.
I kept me clean, my body honoring.
I lived alone; alone I let God live.

By God ignored, for that I Him ignored;
O chastisement abounding on my head!
And God is calm, His silences outpoured;
Ah, silent God, wilt Thou not scourge instead?

V

LOST OPPORTUNITY

LIVING man, I envy thee.
Is it envy of thy wealth,
Envy of thy body's health
Drinking pleasures avidly?

Such delights I envy not;
Once I knew their charming mesh—
Maggots make short work of flesh,
Bodies are but made to rot.

Living man, I envy so
Life that love to God can give,
Life that still for God can live;
But too late life's worth I know.

VI

THE BODY ETERNAL

I CANNOT hide this horror from my eyes,
My spirit's vision that knows sleep no more—
This horrid body that before me lies;
Can be that once this vesture vile I wore?

Yea, garb of flesh that I have cast aside,
Yet can I not release me from its weight.
Dead? Nay, though reft of life it has not died
But lives, and forces me to watch its fate.

Mortality that once I pampered so,
Sleek flesh I struggled to keep free from ills,
Where now is vanished all the ruddy glow?
The livid corpse with stench creation fills.

My corpse—my worldly friends still call it mine,
Above its mass they write my name in stone;
I know it mine without the carven sign:
Who else would seek this hated thing to own?

My lips, my eyes, my ears, my feet, my hands!
I nourished them and taught them greed of sin.
I made my soul their slave in sinly bands.
I seek release, but Death will only grin.

O God, I sold Thee for this pottage-mess
Of fleshly pleasures: hide it from my eyes!
Yea, if Thou'lt free me from its rottenness,
God, I will ask no other Paradise.

VII

VIGIL

HOW peacefully he sleeps"—
I hear them whisper low;
Then some one gently weeps,
Gently lest I may know.

I do not rest in peace;
I do not sleep; nay, sleep
Will never bring release
From this long watch I keep.

God gives His loved ones—rest;
And I that sought Him not
Go on my hopeless quest,
By God unloved, unsought.

O eyes that cannot close,
O soul that cannot sleep,
O burthen of my woes—
To watch in vain and weep.

VIII

THE FEAR OF LOVE

O GOD, I am afraid!
Naked of soul I stand;
O God, I am afraid!
Stay yet thy slaying hand.

O God, I am afraid!
I should not shrink from Thee.
O God, I am afraid!
But God, Thou lovest me.

O God, I am afraid!
I must not tremble so;
O God, I am afraid!
Thou died'st for me I know.

O God, I am afraid!
But, God, I was redeemed;
O God, I am afraid!
For me Thy dear blood streamed.

O God, I am afraid!
No love to Thee I gave;
O God, I am afraid!
Thy love from me I drave.

O God, I am afraid!
My Saviour reprobates.
O God, I am afraid!
No hope! 'tis Love that hates!

IX

THE JOKE

I LAUGH my laugh of scorn;
Ye cannot hear
Who keep your watch forlorn
About my bier.

I grin as ye repeat
Your bead on bead,
The while ye seek to cheat
Hell of its meed.

The Requiems art told
'Mid censuring smoke;
The priest the Host doth hold—
O hellish joke!

O Holy Sacrifice,
Redeemer, God!
And there my body lies
A mocking fraud.

“Perchance he needs no prayers,
He was a saint,”
My eulogist declares,
“But some small taint”—

He cannot see my grin;
The *Aves* lift
To get my venial sin
The needed shrift.

I laugh—deep Hells resound
With jeering yell—
“His corpse for holy ground,
His soul for Hell!”

X

THE DEBT

I AM all memory; I cannot hide
The errings I would fain forget;
Yea, memory is sight—the vision wide
Of all that was, and hence *is* yet.

Those sins of lusty youth I called them passed,
And hid them from my mortal eyes.
There is no past; my sins from first to last
Before me now eternal rise.

I covered them unshriven, unconfessed,
For youth must have its fling, I said;
Sin was a need, repentance but a jest,
And all's the same when one is dead!

I had my joke and laughed at thought of sin;
No sin had ever done me ill!
But now the devils take their turn to grin
And count to me my unpaid bill.

O God, must I that dread accounting pay?
I could have cleansed it with my tears;
And now, alas, how much I weep and pray!
Hell holds me slave eternal years.

XI

DESOLATION

I AM all memory, I number every sin
Vivid as on the day its passing joy I sought;
My soul with sin is writ; but, God, there must have
been
Some goodness in my life, though I remember not.

There must have been sweet deeds of childish innocence,
And many fervent prayers and acts of charity,
High hopes of zeal for good, and tears of penitence—
But all are blotted out; 'tis only sin I see.

O bitter memory, to know that Love once reigned
Within this soul of mine that now is ruled by Hate;
Oh, greatest pain of Hell, to know that Love disdained
Takes e'en its memory, and leaves me desolate.

XII

ESSENTIAL HELL

HOPE goes when Love is gone; 'tis Love alone
That shows compassion to the aching heart.
But Love rejected has withdrawn apart,
And wingèd Hope from out my life has flown.

Pangs of the purging flames I would not dread,
Yea, would I crave the crucible that tries,
And hold the aeons short if but my eyes
Could see Love's distant beacon overhead.

But Love is gone and leaves me to my lot;
O horrid fate of flaming Hell's abyss!
But now I know essential Hell is this—
To live and live where Love and Hope are not.

XIII

JUSTICE

I DO not ask for mercy, God—
No longer is it Thine to show.
Cringe as I may beneath Thy rod,
I bid Thee not Thy wrath forego.

Mercy I lost when Love I lost,
And Love rejected comes no more;
Unloving, I must pay the cost;
Love only findeth Mercy's door.

Love is no more, but Truth remains;
I cannot hide me from its light.
This is my Hell—that Justice reigns.
And I must own its judgment right.

XIV

TILL IT REST IN THEE

PEACE have I lost forevermore.
God made for Him this soul of mine,
And till it find His Love Divine
It moans its sorrow o'er and o'er.

But love is found by love alone,
And long ago my love I killed;
O heart that never can be filled
When God thy claim must e'en disown.

O deepest Hell of endless pain,
To know that in His loving breast
There waiteth still my home of rest,
And I must crave it e'er in vain.

XV

PILLAR OF FIRE

THEY told me Hell was dark.
A black engulfing sea
Where soul and body stark
Would ever buried be.

• Oh, welcome were the pall
Of darkness to my soul,
And I could eager fall
Into Hell's lowest hole.

But Hell is searing light,
An unconsuming flame,
That holds me to the sight
Of all the world in shame.

The shame of sinful deeds
That I in darkness did,
The shame of lustful greeds
I thought securely hid.

Yea, in my soul a flame,
And justice is the light
That blazons forth my shame
Across eternal night.

XVI

ALONE IN HELL

O AWFULNESS of Hell—I am alone!
Where are the countless hosts that habit Hell?
The Luciferan cohorts that were thrown
From heights of Heaven, for that they did rebel?

Where are the damnèd souls of sinful men,
Countless as Vallambrosa's swirling leaves?
I seek, I call, but never to my ken
Come e'en the damned—my soul in silence grieves.

I am alone—God speaks not e'en to curse;
I am alone, my partners of despair
Flee from my vision as if I were worse
Than very demons out of Satan's lair.

I am alone. Oh, for a kindred voice,
E'en for the howl of souls in agony;
It were a sound to make my soul rejoice
To know companionship in misery.

Companionship? Am I the only Lost?
Of all mankind is Hell my very own?
I am alone! God, had I known the cost!—
Who worships self, in Hell finds self alone.

DIES IRAE

SHALL I forget—that day—
How fair I thought life's way?
The thousand things I prized,
That made earth paradised;
Clean flesh and healthy glow,
Senses unknown to woe;
Sweet music on the ear,
The palate's goodly cheer;
Fair visions to the sight,
The daily grace of light?
Alas, the blinded eyes,
That made earth Paradise;
Remorse that ne'er will sleep,
That bliss was sold so cheap!

ASH WEDNESDAY

WHAT dreams one dreams when one is glad!
I claimed the whole world for my trust;
And then I heard the chanting sad
Of one old priest—"Thou are but dust."

I fashioned wreaths of happy years;
My treasures I would guard from rust;
I knew a world that knew not tears;
But then the voice—"Thou are but dust."

Oh, life must have some living flame
That is not sport of every gust;
The years of joy must know my name;
The echo this—"Thou are but dust."

To wish the treasures others know,
Wealth, fame and love, can be but just;
The voice:—Yea, have them; even so,
Remember man that thou are dust.

O God, there is another I
That dreams life's love and not life's lust;
Heed this and not my body's cry;
Make ME the victor over dust.

IN A CEMETERY CORNER

I

THE HOUR GLASS

THEY filled a grave with yellow sand;
An hour-glass did it seem to me
Set on the earth at God's right hand,
To tell time to Eternity.

II

THE GRAVE-DIGGER'S PHILOSOPHY

"Dig deep enough and China will be found"—
The flippant passer said to me.
China? I dig six little feet of ground
And find each time Eternity!

III

WELCOME HOME

I like a grave that's neat and trim,
Cheery with flowers, as if to say—
"We must prepare to welcome him;
This may be Resurrection day."

IV

EPITAPHS

Scorn not the man who seeks to have his name
Resound through all the ages yet to be;
His flesh may know it but as wish for fame;
His soul—the ache for Immortality.

V

THE CRUSHING BURDEN

Yea, Atlas, thou couldst bear the earth,
Thou art so powerful and brave;
How much would e'en thy strength be worth
To bear the sands that fill one grave?

VI

UNSATISFIED

"He had a long and happy life"—
So they dismissed him with a line,
As if existence gave him all
That he deserved, and thought it fine.

O God, if this were all to get,
Why give me hopes and then destroy?
Nay! promising Thyself to me,
Thou wilt not fool me with a toy.

VII

REST

When into sleep of death I slip,
God, hold me tight and gently smile;
Hush Heaven with finger at Thy lip,
And say, "Poor child, now rest a while."

VIII

MY DEATH DAY

There will be a sunrise then
As there is today;
Live men won't much notice it—
'Tis their wonted way.

O'er the hill that is my grave
I will strain my eyes;
Ah, but graves are piled too high
To behold sunrise.

IX

ASPIRATION

A little round of years—
I would not value it;
Much joy, and more of tears,
And then existence quit?

It were a foolish play
Enduring life for this.
If I must go life's way
I must have God for bliss.

X

PREPARATION

If peace at the end, what matters
The toil of the years?
Life is a garment of tatters?
Age drinks the dregs of tears?

But—peace at the end; the labor
Makes sweeter the rest;
Rags make more glorious Thabor,
Tears give to bliss its zest.

XI

THE GLORY OF CREATION

When all the world is ruined on that day,
Thou wilt regard the wreck without a sigh;
A happy God if, all else passed away,
Thou dost behold unruined such as I.

MY TOMB

IF I might have the choosing of my tomb,
My burial would not be in the field,
For fields are lonely; there no kind hands shield
From wind and rain and endless night of gloom.
I would that loving hands might find me room
Beneath some altar of the Mass concealed,
To lie there till the Judgment is revealed
(Such graves for saints; the potter's field my doom).

But let me fancy this blest resting-place
While there the Massing-priest above my bones
Makes of my tomb with Holy Sacrifice
Another Calvary. Mayhap Christ's grace
For that we shared for tomb the self-same stones
Will make me sharer of His Paradise.

BLINDNESS

THE sunlight on the brow of Jesus beams,
And Judas looks enraptured on that brow;
Then in that light a bit of silver gleams,
And Judas seeth not the Master now.

Methought there was a while I saw His eyes,
Gloried with love and searching to my soul.
Alas! my gaze has dropped from Paradise,
And counts the silver that procured his dole.

FALLING SANDS

MY youth departs; the gravid sands
Find, grain by grain, the nether glass.
A little hour; my helpless hands
May hinder not the sands to pass.

So youth is dead; its grave is high;
Buried before it knew 'twas born.
Alas, that youth must even die
O'ercome by night while waiting morn.

Yea, foolish soul that ever tells
What patterns out of life 'twill weave,
And then amazed hears the bells
Tolling the angelus of eve.

THE TWO MASTERS

GOD is so good—(yet Mammon is not bad)
'Tis nice to honor God—(to some degree)
He owneth Heaven and Hell; care must be had
Lest one should make of Him an enemy.

This God somehow we must keep on our side,
He promises such future happiness;
But Mammon gives his joys ere we have died—
No harm to serve them both—(God more or less.)

An easy master is this Mammon god—
O foolish heart that trafficest in sin!
Thy Mammon stripes his courtiers with his rod,
And then doth flouted God His wrath begin.

To serve Thee, God! Let come the sacrifice
Of greedy gods that lure with transient bliss.
Am I a fool to barter Paradise
When Mammon Judas cometh with a kiss?

CONSIDER THE VIOLETS

THERE will be violets when I am dead;
They will be just as blue and just as sweet
As when they blossomed first at Adam's feet,
Unconscious of the curses on his head.

There will be violets; they have no dread
Of death and graves, their cycle but complete
Only when violets refuse to greet
The Light that offers them their daily bread.

O little violets, so wisdom-eyed,
To me you thus reveal the mystery
How that you still will live when I shall be
The dust a million years have blown aside:—
There will be violets upon the sod
While violets are satisfied with God.

SHOWER OF ROSES

DROP me a rose, O Little Flower,
A rose as white as thy purity.
Many the roses in Eden's bower,
The Gardener pulleth them all for thee.
Barren my garden of blossoms bright;
Oh, drop me one of thy roses fair,
And maybe my God will enjoy the sight,
And walk a while in my garden there.

Drop me a rose, O Little Flower,
A rose as red as thy flamed heart's hue;
Many the roses where God doth shower
His Precious Blood as a purpling dew.
A heart of stone is this heart of mine;
Oh, drop upon it thy rose of red,
And God may notice the heavenly sign
And think 'tis a worthy heart instead.

Drop me a rose, O Little Flower,
A rose as gold as thy golden crown;
For Heaven will never miss the dower
Of golden roses thou droppest down.
Never a treasurer my poor hands hold;
Oh, drop one rose of gold to me,
And I will buy with this heavenly gold
A place in his Garden, close to thee.

TO THE LITTLE FLOWER

I

STILL there are violets,
And violets will be
Until the last sun sets
With all mortality.

I'd give them all, to see
The violets you held,
Knowing how fragrantly
Of Paradise they smelled.

II

O little Botanist of God,
That knows where every flower is found,
Some day come find the frost-filled sod
That roofs my cemetery mound,

And say: "He once gave flowers to me,"
And drop one little rose of prayer;
My dust will catch the fragrancy
And know that spring at last is there.

THE LITTLE WAY

A LITTLE way where the violets grow,
A little path in the shade,
A little walk through the valleys low
Where the soft green grass is laid.
Some sturdy feet may quest the road
That climbs the rocky hills,
With track of blood and roody load
And agony that kills:
O Little Flower of the little way,
A violet still may be
A Passion-Flower though it dares not stay
At the summit of Calvary.
God's angels gather every flower
As well as every thorn;
Pray, we be found within His bower
Upon the harvest morn.

THE LITTLE FLOWER

GOD maketh choice where He will plant the rose :
The Master-Gardener, He knoweth best
The place where lilies look their loveliest,
And where most radiant the poppy blows :
These for the highway of the world He grows ;
But then in some lone wood where none make quest
He hides a violet, unknown, unguessed,
And He alone the glory of it knows.

Thus had He grown thee, little violet,
And misered to Himself thy loveliness
The while on thee His fairest art He spent :
But now when thou art in His Garden set,
Thou art so sweet, He sendeth thee to bless
Our garden with the glory of thy scent.

THE STRONG

YOU flower, the tiniest bee bends to the sod,
Why weakness feign, who lift my heart to God?

THE DEAD POET

THY singing done, and mute the lyrèd string,
I see thee silent stand, as listening
While strident Chorus Death begins to sing.

Silent? Ah, no, though silent to our ear:
For that of God and Love thou sangest here
Thou, Poet-Prophet, now art Poet-Seer.

THE STRAY SPIRIT

O LOVE, I have come back this way,
A vagrant spirit seeking peace;
You do not heed the prayers I pray,
You will not help me find release.

“Poor fellow—dead these many years”—
You say when some one speaks my name;
No more; life hath but scanty tears.
To Death love soon gives up its claim.

Yet foolish I the while recall
The love and tenderness you gave
To my sick body; then the pall
Hid me—henceforth to you a grave.

O love, if e'er I needed aid,
I need it, dead, poor homeless wraith.
You do not heed; your love was laid
Beside my corpse and your dead faith.

HIS VISITATION

And Eilzabeth cried out whence is this to me?

O WOMAN, wondering that she who bore
Thy Lord should come unto thy lowly door
What deep reproach thy words are to this
breast
That wonders not though God Himself is Guest.

THE MINER

M^Y Christ came mining down the stars:
O stars, your wealth by earth's wealth pales!
For earth-mines gave those priceless bars
Whereof He made the Cross's nails.

AT SUNSET

THE Day is dying fast ; and Mother Night,
Unfolding Death's black pall, stands silent by ;
Glimmers a star—the Day's death-candle light,
And grieving seas their *De Profundis* cry.

THROUGH TEARS

THE skies dripped down their rain
Till flower-beds were aflood;
But then the sun, and as through pain
There smiled the crocus bud.

And thus life dripped its woe
And turbid made my lot;
But could Love ever blossom so,
If tears had fallen not?

DEAD ALTAR-FLOWERS

I WOULD not moan the wilted rose,
Far exiled from its garden-close:
Was it not glory to have spent
The death-sigh near God's Sacrament?

Long years were thine, young nun, they said,
Hadst thou not wilted, cloisterèd;
But ah! the glory to have died
"Too soon," for joy thou wert His bride.

THE DAWN

LIGHT runs for shriving to the sun;
'Tis day again:
And lo! before the Risen One
Saint Magdalen.

THE MIGHTY WORK

O JESUS, set me to work, I prayed;
How idle I, and Thou needest aid:
Some deed heroic, oh, set for me,
To win from the world great fame for Thee.

He said: "Wouldst thou have a great work done,
Then take the trade of the Carpenter's Son,
And hew thee a cross from out life's tree,
And bear it—a hero—unto Me."

PAIN'S HARVEST

L AVISH of thorns,
And a niggard rose!
O God, 'tis the way
Thy giving goes;

Thorn after thorn,
But at last they stop;
The rose, not the thorns,
Is at the top.

LONELINESS

I NEVER heard a lonelier thing:
'Twas not the weeping of a child,
'Twas not a mother sorrowing,
Or maid abandoned, shrieking wild.

I sat above the city street,
While all the night was slumbering;
A girl laughed—silence, then, complete;
I never heard a lonelier thing.

WISHES

IF I could have my wish today,
Be sure 'twould be just happiness;
With not a care to wish away,
And not an evil to confess.

A wish that all I call my friends
Have found life sweeter for my love;
A wish that where our journey ends
The Gates will open wide above.

A wish that spite of errors past
I will be welcomed lovingly,
And know the holy joy at last
That somehow God is proud of me.

THE GARDEN OF LIFE

LIFE is a garden sometimes
Where roses sweet abound:
But the roses go,
And the drifts of snow
Make life but a barren ground.

I dream of that garden sometimes,
A-bloom with fragrant rose;
But the rose is a wraith
That mocks my faith,
While my heart is beneath the snows.

Life is a garden sometimes;
Yea, always—thanks to God!
For after the pain
Love flowers again
From out of the barren rod.

THE POET'S QUEST

HE sought for Fame, but never Fame he found;
Toil only brought from out his heart's dead
ground
One little flower of poetry.

He found a poem: but within its heart
He found a thing he knew not, hid apart—
His very soul in ecstasy.

He found his soul standing with feet unshod
Before the gentle majesty of God,
And slighted Fame called bootlessly.

THE MUMMERS

WHAT mummers are we all! we dance, we sing,
We laugh, and bid our fellow players see
The measure of our joviality,
The while we fancy real our fancying,
One saith, "See, I am Fame, time-conquering;"
Or, "I am Wealth, the world belongs to me;"
And this one, "I am Venus, conscience-free;"
Our stage a kingdom, and our soul the king.
Poor clown who grinned although his heart was sore!
Anon we lay aside the motley dress,
Sighing the while our eyes with sadness dim,
Our hearts still empty, with the feasting o'er.
Too late our quest: speaks judging Happiness—
"Ye found not me because ye sought not Him."

TO THE SWALLOW

O SWALLOW, fleeting swallow,
I do not envy thee,
E'en though I may not follow
Thy soaring presently.
Deride me not as mortal,
For cleaving not the sky;
Hast yet reached Heaven's portal?
Nor wilt how much may'st try.

O swallow, infant swallow,
Scorn not because I seem
Below thee in the hollow
Where wingless beings dream.
Too young art thou for knowing
How Christ surpassed thy flight,
Nor saw'st thou Mary going
Beyond the eagle's sight.

O swallow, piteous swallow,
Well might I thee deride,
For one day shall I follow
Where wingèd choirs abide.
So fly thee high and higher,
Till lost amid the skies;
Thou never can'st aspire,
As I, to Paradise.

SPRINGTIME

SOMEWHERE there is a quiet field
No man hath tilled;
No fruitful harvest doth it yield,
With rank grass filled.

But God hath circled it about,
And spread its loam;
Ages ago He picked it out
For my last home.

Wild grasses—but each spring a flower
Lifteth its head,
My prophet of th' immortal hour
God flowers His dead.

RESURRECTION

TO cast the seed into the ground.
Knowing that after sun and rain
In fruitful fields of golden grain
The plenteous harvest shall be found:

Yea, knowing—but our souls that grope
Up through the darkness to the light;
Oh, hold them, God, the long, long night,
The while their only yield is Hope.

DEATH'S CARNIVAL

LIFE is a place of laughter :
(There is no laughter in Heaven.)
Laughter at birth, and after,
Till Death hath made replevin.

Life is a place of sadness,
For that it is filled with laughing :
A moment the world is gladness—
'Tis Death the cynic chaffing.

Ah me, that slighted sorrow,
But sorrow hath not pouted :
Her certain day tomorrow,
When wanton joy is flouted.

Life is a place of laughter,
But the merriment dies a-borning ;
Tonight there is death—yet after
The world laughs on till morning.

Aye, morning and night, unending
The laughter we fools are making,
While our death-cortege is wending
To the Night that hath no breaking.

THE GREAT LOVER

HOW shall I know when my lover has come?
How shall I know His face?

By this—that the worry of all the world
Hath banished its every grace.

How shall I know when my lover has come?
How shall I know His eyes?

By this—that His eyes are the wells of woe
Where the grief of ages lies.

How shall I know when my lover is come?
How shall I know His speech?

By this—that His voice hath a lonesome sound
That for loving doth beseech.

Sorry the lover you promise me,
A lover oppressed with woe!

Aye, LOVER, indeed, for your heart shall find
'Tis Jesus that cometh so.

ALL SAINTS DAY

LIFT up your harps, ye seraphim!
A theme I give you for your hymn;
Sing ye the paeon of the slain
The martyred hosts that went with Pain
Through fire and blood, and smiling died
For that they loved Love Crucified.

Lift up your harps, ye seraphim!
A theme I give you for your hymn;
Sing ye the nuptial song of them
That wear the virgin's diadem,
For that they jealous kept their tryst,
Virgin to meet a virgin Christ.

Lift up your harps, ye seraphim!
A theme I give you for your hymn:
Sing ye the great confessors' names
Whom e'en the Trinity proclaims,
For that a Christ they did confess
Whom men denied with scornfulness.

Lift up your harps, ye seraphim!
A theme I give you for your hymn:
Sing ye the pauper and the king
Now fellows at Christ's banqueting.
Sing ye the hoary penitents,
Sing ye the babbling innocents

Lift up your harps, ye seraphim!
A theme I give you for your hymn:
Sing ye the hope of sinful me
That moan in earth's captivity.
Pray ye to God that I may know
What way Christ's sons to Heaven go!

RAIN IN MAY

O VER the leaves is the ripple of rain;
But who minds rain in the May?
Rains and winds may worry in vain,
For the little leaves laugh at the dreadful fray,
And there on the branches they all just stay.

Little green leaves, you can teach us so,
With your laugh at the rains of spring:
Life has its winds and its rains of woe;
What of it? We'll soon hear the robins sing
If fast to our God's good tree we cling.

IN MEMORIAM

YOUNG Priest of God, we send thee on thy way;
And there thy way lies, over drifts of stars,
And up the light-paths sifting through the
bars
Of gates that open to eternal day.

Thy feet are light upon the homing road;
But yesterday it was the aching trudge
Of him that goes to be God's willing drudge.
The Shepherd-Priest that helps Christ bear His load.

Too soon He calls? While yet so many sheep
Are waiting for the coming of thy feet?
But God is Shepherd, too, and runs to meet
His best belovèd ones—to give them sleep.

So, Shepherd-Priest, God take thee on thy way!
A while thy way was ours, and then He led
Thy feet into the Emmaus road instead,—
To bide with Him through Heaven's eternal day.

EASTER HARVEST

"But now Christ is risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep, the first fruits Christ, then they that are of Christ." I Cor. XV: 20, 23.

ONE bursting rose upon its tree;
But myriad buds are waiting patiently,
Knowing that one day buds will roses be.

So row on row our graves we furrow deep,
In patient confidence (the while we weep)—
The firstfruits Christ, then we who in Him sleep.

TO A MINOR POET

THERE are no Miltons now to thrill the soul:
So sneer the mighty critics, as they tear
To shreds the "versifiers" that would dare
Indite their thoughts upon the parchment scroll.
Parchment, forsooth, for petty rhymes; how droll!
Ye minor poets, see the dust-shelves, where
Are countless books forgotten, and beware
Of seeking fame while Milton voices roll.

Did ever poet sing for thought of fame?
There were no Milton had young Milton sealed
His lips because a Shakespeare once had sung;
So let not pride thy lips to silence shame.
God signed thee prophet; shalt no message yield
Because He gave thee Osee's, not Isaias' tongue?

(Osee, one of the minor prophets, prophesied in the kingdom of Israel about the time that Isaias prophesied in the kingdom of Juda)

SHADOWS

A DOWN the vale of shadows turns my way,
 Labored the step where once my youth had run :
 Yet Hope is singing at the dying day,
Knowing that shadows still proclaim the Sun.

VALUATION

O SUN and moon and stars and earthly sod,
'Tis I—not you—am treasured best of God;
Yea, not for you the mart of Calvary
Took all of Heaven's treasure, but for me.

A PRIEST'S PRAYER

HOW oft, O Lord, didst Thou my hand uplift
To make o'er sinners the assoiling sign;
For sake of these I gave Thee, be my shrift,
For that I eased Thy burden, ease Thou mine.

EASTER LIGHT

DANCE, dance, O Easter sun,
Dance, dance, be overjoyed;
For that night's rule is done,
And Death is all destroyed.

"Let there be light," God said;
O glory of that day
When thou, gold-vestured
Didst dance along earth's way!

Thou hast not danced since then;
(Oh, dark the sinful years!)
How dance when eyes of men
Could see thee not from tears?

But dance, dance now, O sun,
For night again is slave,
And Light, the risen One,
Comes Victor from the grave.

A MOTHER'S DEATH-DAY

LADYE, I introduce to thee this day
A new arrival at the court of God;
Give kindest welcome unto her, I pray,
Bid Justice be all-gentle with his rod.

She is no stranger, Ladye, unto thee;
So many times I heard her sing thy praise,
So many times she spake thy name to me,
And with thy glories filled my childhood days.

She loved thee—as the Irish women love—
In all her thoughts, in all her kindly deeds;
Her feet on earth, her head the stars above,
Her hands fast bound to thine with her dear beads.

She loved thee, Ladye, and she loved thy Son,
His Name with holy reverence she blessed;
Her simple prayer—"God's holy will be done!"
E'en while her heart with sorrow was oppressed.

She had her joys; dear Ladye, thou wast kind
To let her share thy joyful mysteries;
She had her woes—yea, woes all mothers find—
I thank thee that she shared thine agonies.

And, dear my Ladye, she was good to me,
And taught me how to be God's worshiper;
If aught I did for Jesus or for thee,
Beg God to mark the credit unto her.

No mighty panegyric can I say,
But just the sobbing of my rosary
To tell thee, Ladye, I have lost this day
A mother who was all the world to me.

I recommend her, Ladye, to thy care;
Be good to her; she was a child of thine.
She shared thy pain, let her thy glory share;
And be her mother just as she was mine.

A LITTLE IRISH WOMAN

O LITTLE Irish woman, you're a stranger quite
to me
And I do not vex myself at all about your history;

Is it Meath or is it Sligo, is it Clare or Donegal,
That despatched you o'er the ocean? Sure it matters not
at all:

You're a little Irish woman; that's enough to know you by,
With the memories of Ireland still mirrored in your eye.

For the years of exile have not changed the look or talk
of you,

And you're just the same sweet colleen that the folks at
home once knew.

O little Irish woman, toil and care have lined your face,
And your portion of the world has been a rough and
thorny place,

But your brow was not the first to wear a blessed crown of
thorns

And it seems to me a halo now your old gray head adorns.
What's the secret of contentment that is yours in spite of
woe?

Sure, I know I hear the answer in your beads that rattle so,
As you kneel within the shadow at our Blessed Lady's
shrine,

A glory on your face as if you visioned things Divine.

O little Irish woman, you're a stranger quite to me,
And I know that while I kneel to you I'm close to sanctity,
And your silent presence whispers that the things we've
sought to gain

Compared with all the riches of your soul are poor and
vain.

O little Irish woman, it was God Himself that sent
The likes of you as exiles to a stranger continent,
And the benediction of your life convinces me 'tis true
That Ireland is the Isle of Saints because it gave us you.

DREAMS IN THE RAIN

DREAMS that come in the rain—
Of a lad with his face at the pane,
And the wonder of youth that the world
should know
E'en for a day the touch of woe.

Dreams that come in the rain—
Of a mother that hums the strain
Of an old, old song, till the listening lad
Forgets the rain, forgets he was sad.

Dreams that come in the rain—
The dreams of youth's dreams again;
And it's I could forget that the world is drear
If once again she were singing here.

AN OLD IRISH WOMAN

SHE had no book-lore; she could only read
The big print of her *Garden of the Soul*;
Her penmanship made but a sorry scroll,
To sign her name was a laborious deed.
She knew no state affairs, and gave no heed
To art or science or the social roll:
Her only travel, when the steerage hole
Bore her away from Erin's crying need.
Yet was she every inch a lady great,
With culture gotten elsewhere than in school;
Her wisdom made the book-wise man a fool,
Wisdom, refinement seemed in her innate.
True lady, who had learned each gentle art
From fellowship with Ladye Mary's heart.

WHEN TOILERS PRAY

THESE are no poets; not a lilting rhyme
 Could their lips fashion for a song of praise;
 Theirs not the art of amatory lays,
Of verse repeating verse in mellow chime.
These toiling hands, seamèd with labor's grime,
 No deftness know in wreathing crowning bays;
 Untuned their ear while gentle zithern plays;
Nor walk they florid ways of rose and thyme.
No poets they; toilers in mill and field,
 And drudgers in the house of poverty;
 Yet with the faith that casts the prophet spell
Unlettered lips poetic raptures yield:
 'Tis but an AVE chanted prosily.
 But Heaven is thrilled—as once by Gabriel.

THE PRIEST'S MOTHER

I KNOW a corner in the skies
So close to God's own throne
No mighty saints of Paradise
Can claim it as their own.

'Tis for a woman old and gray
Who thought herself the least,
Nor knew how God desires to pay
The mother of a priest.

Through ways of toil, through ways of pain
Where joy was sacrificed,
She led into God's holy fame
Her son—another Christ.

O Christ, Who art Love's Almoner
To Mary at Thy feast,
I know Thou wilt be kind to her
Who bore Thy brother priest.

RELEASE

NO SADDER is the bird than I,
That, wounded, vainly seeks the sky,
And wonders wherefore must it die.

As wounded swallow, lo, am I;
Yet wounds that made the swallow die
Uncage my soul to mount the sky.

TREASURES IN HEAVEN

GOD is no miser : see the coinèd gold,
The countless stars, He flings out Heaven's
door,
Wealth? Yea, but only sweepings of His floor
By those rich gifts the Heavens for me hold.

THE PLUS SIGN

A SIMPLE lesson in arithmetic:
Beam crossing beam—the Cross on
Calvary.

It is God's Plus Sign, tie beatific,
That joineth Him unto the world and me.

THANKSGIVING

GOD that hast sent me gift of pleasure
From childhood days, so full the measure
Of faith and hope and love, all blent
In one deep draught of sweet content—
I thank Thee for it.

God that will send me gift of sorrow,
If not today, full sure tomorrow,
Oh, be the God of pleasure still,
My sorrow-cup with this joy fill—
To thank Thee for it.

FROM THE MOUTH OF BABES

“**M**AKE me a poem,” said the little maid;
Seven was she, the age so unafraid
To ask for e’en the guerdon of a star.
(There are no doubts in prayer where children are).

Make you a poem? Yes; what shall it be?
About a bird, a flower, the stars, the sea?
But she, the critic, shook her curly head;
“A poem’s nicer all ’bout God,” she said.

O little preacher, wise with innocence,
Your humbled poet bows in penitence;
Fool poet that would dare to make a hymn
For you who listen to the Seraphim!

A RHYMER'S PRAYER

I THAT have written pious things,
The while I fancied me devout,
Shall I one day know anguishings
When God my song and me casts out?

Yea, I have sung my praising hymn;
My skill was mean, yet was my heart
Eager to cope with seraphim,
To give to Him my little part.

God will remember my desire,
And how I sang, His worshiper—
Alas! in all the starry choir
Who sang such hymns as Lucifer?

Lord, let Thy love inspire my lay,
And purify this heart of mine,
Till one poor jongleur sings his way
To fellowship with choirs divine.

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